

Witty Trench Papers Show Victory Spirit

**Edited Under Shell
Fire, They Breathe
Indomitable Cour-
age and Reveal Op-
timism Unparalleled**

A COLLECTOR of war literature in this city has just received from England a cheerful record of the war as seen through the medium of the British temperament. It is a good sized volume called *The Wipers Times and After* and contains facsimile reprints of five of the newspapers published by the British Expeditionary Force in Flanders.

We have Corporal Trim's word for it that the army of which he was an honored member swore horribly in Flanders. Now, two centuries later, in the thick of a very different campaign that same British soldiery is using another method of relieving the tedium of warfare. It is more humorous, even though not more human; yet if one cares to read between the lines there is something besides amusement to be found in the unquenched and unquenchable gaiety revealed in the roughly printed columns.

"Have you ever sat in a trench in the middle of a battle and corrected proofs?" asks the editor, and continues: "Try it. That is what happened on the Somme, and the *Somme Times* was the result. The paper has never yet been printed out of the front area, and once our works were within 700 yards of the front line and above ground."

The *Wipers Times* was, however, the pioneer among the group. It was started, the editor informs us, "as the result of the discovery of an old printing house just off the square at Wipers. Some printing house and some square!"

"There were parts of the building remaining, the rest was on top of the press. The type was all over the countryside; in fact, the most perfect picture of the effects of kultur as interpreted by 5.9s ever seen."

A sergeant "by nature an optimist and in previous existence a printer" was responsible for inspiring the editor to be with confidence in the derelict press, and the *Wipers Times* was accordingly produced. The first two numbers were printed under highly peculiar circumstances.

Only one page could be set up at a time, with the sergeant printer and his devils watching for the shell fire to subside into moderate quiet. Then they would rush to the works and stay there till "Fritz got too near to be pleasant."

In 1917 the press was marooned behind the lines waiting for the editors to "commandeer a tank as a travelling printing works." One wonders where the spring of 1918 has found it, and still more what task the editors have found to face with the same laughter and the same bravery.

As in the case of more pretentious news sheets, the most significant human documents in the *Wipers Times* and its successors are the advertisements. The famous Cloth Hall is recommended as an amusement resort, "the best ventilated hall in town." Among the attractions are "The Johnsons—a Shout, a Scream, a Roar. This season the Johnsons have carried all before them," and "The Brothers Whizz-Bang. These merry little fellows get there every time."

The Menin Gate Cinema exhibits "The Great Spectacular picture—Inferno—music and effects of this great picture by the International Orchestra." At Dead Cow Farm Cinema may be seen "Flounders in Flanders" and "Pipped on the Parapet," besides the film "He Didn't Want to Do It," featuring "The Conscientious Objectors." The Fossileum has "The Duma Troupe of Quick Change Artists" and the "Great American Film Play, 'Teddy Get Your Gun.'"

Even Have an "Agony Column."

In the "Agony Column" is offered: "For sale, cheap, desirable residence, climate warm, fine view. Splendid links close by, good shooting. Owner going abroad." Wanted are "Agents for 'Morning Hate' Toilet Soap. Excellent opening for an industrious young man." Publishers' announcements include "God's Good Man—An Autobiography of William Hohenzollern," "Eric, or Little by Little, by Dean Haig" and "The Cruise of the Catch-a-Lot, by Billy Beatty."

Correspondents carry on business as usual. Pro Bono Publico complains that "lately the lighting by night in Oxford and Regent streets has been terribly neglected, star shells being sent up at very irregular intervals. A Well Wisher's protests against 'the disgraceful state of repair the roads are getting into' and demands to know 'what our city fathers are doing to allow such a state of things to come to pass.'" "Timidity," accosted at night quite abruptly with the words "Who are you?" endeavored to find a constable,



"Some printing house," home of "The Wipers Times."

but could not and asks plaintively, "Where are our police and what are they doing?"

"Bellary Helloc" contributes characteristically mathematical and practical estimates of the military situation. Reckoning 12,000,000 as the total fighting population of Germany, he gradually and incontrovertibly disposes of eleven entire millions and most of the twelfth until he finds himself left with 2,750 fit for active service. He accounts for 2,150 of these on the eastern front, 584 he writes off as Generals and staff, leaving 16 men on the western front. Hence the cheerfully imminent collapse of the western campaign.

The western campaign provided for he turns his attention to the east. Owing chiefly to the vast number of natives required to manufacture Turkish Delight, the fighting forces of the Turkish belligerents may confidently be considered as reduced to 1,419. The deduction is obvious.

"Colyums" are popular features, though the "colyumists" remain safely anonymous. "People We Take Off Our Hats To" and "Things We Want to Know" are listed. Under the former "The French" appear first; under the latter, frequently repeated, occurs the question, "Are We as Offensive as We Might Be?" This soul searching inquiry appears again under the caption, "Questions a Platoon Commander Should Ask Himself," with an illustration—carved, we are told, on a

piece of wood by a sapper with a pen-knife—of a highly offensive looking young "nut" in military garb.

"Aunt Annie" has a corner for "Tender Talks to Tiny Tots"; there is a thrilling serial "From Bugler Boy to Brigadier"; a remarkably sophisticated "Violet's Chronicle of Fashion"; a limerick competition in which the prizes of 5,000,000 and 2,500,000 francs are regretfully awarded to the editor and the sub-editors; a sporting column; in fact every feature appears to which the newspaper addict from the student of "The Pink 'Un" to the feminist devotee of the *Ladies' World* is accustomed in Blighty.

Verse Flourishes Freely.

All sorts and conditions of verse flourish on the soil of this trench journalism. There is the familiar slangy type of "The sergeant to the private said," with a colorful sprinkle of "bloomings" and an ample supply of "Rubaiyat of William Hohenzollern" and others. There are glimpses of trench life such as the following:

The world wasn't made in a day,
And Eve didn't ride in a bus;
But most of the world's in a sandbag.
The rest of it's plastered on us.

A necessary warning to the romantically inclined is given in the concluding quotation of "Love and War."

"Don't dream when you're near machine guns,"

Is a thing to bear in mind;
Think of love when not between Huns;
A sniper's quick, and love is blind.

A "B. E. F. Alphabet" begins with a rhyming tour de force:

A is the army in which he's a veteran
Who's fought for a year from the Somme
Up to Meteren,
Finding in winter each week is a wetter 'un
And passing his time in the trenches.

R voices a familiar complaint:

R the Returns to be rendered by noon
Of the number of men who have seen a blue moon,
Speak Japanese or have been to Rangoon.
Before they came out to the trenches.

In the "Mesopotamian Alphabet" there are some not wholly cheerful echoes of the eastern campaign.

J is the Jam, with the label that lies,
And states that in Paris it won the first prize;
But out here we use it for catching the flies
That swarm in Mesopotamia.

Besides these rhymes of the dilettante in the trenches the *Wipers Times* prints among its contributions the work of a "published" poet, Gilbert Frankau, the author of "Behind the Guns." Mr. Frankau melodiously versifies a grievance in "Wails to the Mails," addressed to a fellow journalist.

Northcliffe, my Northcliffe,
Ah! greater than Mars,
Or double faced Janus
Whose portal unbars
The flood tide of battle,
Napoleon of 'Pars."

Who rulest the seas,
And the earth and the air,
And the manifold medals
"Base" officers wear,
Northcliffe, my Northcliffe,
Now hark to my prayer.

It is not all the most brilliant kind of fooling perhaps that is preserved in this reprint of work done amid the strangest surroundings that ever echoed the call for copy. Yet we could better spare better jests, for when these men laugh it is "that we may not weep."

Sarajevo, War Cradle, as Seen To-day

THE trip into southern Bosnia is interspersed with tragic, interesting and entertaining intermezzi. From Bosnisch-Brod on the train is overcrowded. A glance into a compartment half empty discloses like a flash the most terrible misery of war: on an armchair an elderly Bosnian, a landsturner, is resting. His legs are bandaged, both eyes blind, his cheeks pierced by bullet wounds that will not heal. An Italian shell is the cause. His tough Bosnian virility is still upholding him; even if the face, terribly mutilated, has lost the power of expression, his mouth can still talk, describe the misery.

On account of the overcrowding of the train we decide to seek a comfortable place in the baggage car. With blankets the compartment is soon made habitable, and as a talkative Bosnian railroad official travels along there is no lack of variety.

We reached Sarajevo in the middle of the night, behind time as usual. It was slowing. The only means to reach the town from the depot is a tramcar. The hotel is found soon; we are tired after the long trip in the baggage car and not very particular as to the cleanliness of the place and soon we fall asleep.

In the morning it looks a little better, although there is melting slush in the streets which some smart Moslems are trying to overcome by wearing brand new rubbers over their old felt slippers.

Walking around, we are soon in the midst of things. It takes only a few steps and we reach the street corner where three and a half years ago the Austrian Crown Prince and his wife were hit. There is really nothing remarkable about this historic spot. A grocery store

forms the background of the place where the world drama began. Into the pavement a big cast iron plate is sunk, denoting the place where the automobile was at the moment of the murder. Close by, leaning upon the bridge that crosses the little Miljaka River, there is a plain monument, a double column of some taste, bearing the medallions of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife, less tasteful.

As to the tragedy itself there are still several contradictory statements making the rounds. It seems not clear that the police, knowing the sentiment of the Irredentists and obliged to prevent any accident, utterly failed. When the motor proceeded after the bomb had failed and turned into Francis Joseph street, the murder followed. In every case the couple would have faced danger, except they had changed their plan to drive through the city. As we are told, the Crown Prince, who was rather obstinate and not inclined to compromise, refused to consent to any change in spite of all suggestions, and so he was responsible for the catastrophe.

To-day everything is peaceful and quiet in Sarajevo. It is Sunday and the weather bad, so you see not many people in the streets. The town is wholly European in its new parts. A fog, wet and cold, hides the surroundings, said to be nice in summer. It gives the town a frosty, unpleasant look. Fine modern buildings present themselves, the post office, the Palace of Justice; also barracks, long, sober looking boxes, are to be seen, the same as everywhere. We pay a visit to the Governor of the country in the Konak. The chief cannot be seen on account of his impending departure, but this does not prevent us from inspecting the building, formerly the seat of Turkish Government.

Near the modern lines of streets that look factory made the Turkish quarter, the Bashzaraiar Bazaar, a very picturesque spot, is stretching out. Most are little wooden shanties, open at the front for display. Only with the Turk the infinite variety of the Orient appears. Here, too, there is no eagerness to sell. As we are told, the supply shows a strong decrease, while the demand, as everywhere, is increased, enabling the seller to dispose of his goods without effort. In spite of the wintry temperature—we are 750 meters above the surface of the sea—everything is done in the open air; tinsmiths and cobblers are noisily attending to their work, a delightful mixup is surrounding their stand. Also carpet weavers are knotting the costly floor coverings; everything is enormously dear and to be had only for fancy prices.

On the heights around the Moslems erected their homes, most of them old, weatherbeaten huts, shingle roofed, surrounded by a ramshackle board fence, which is to protect the harem from inquisitive eyes. The Turk's home is his castle; nobody is permitted to look inside. Little alleys, full of corners and stones, are winding their way through groups of houses that seem to be plastered on the heights. In the evening, when darkness begins, a walk through the stony streets is an innocent delight.

We enjoy the excellent beauties of the Begova Mosque, Bosnia's largest, a building almost 500 years old. In our felt overshoes we slip across magnificent carpets. The large, square room is crowned by a cupola, Turkish inscriptions decorate the walls, in an anteroom Moslems are kneeling in prayer. Next door is the grave of the mosque's builder. It is said a hair from the beard of the Prophet is lying in state there.